

3 November 1981

NOTE FOR: Harry Rowen

FROM : Hal Ford

SUBJECT : Some Non-Reactive Projects

1. Consequences of a Future Sino-Soviet Detente. True, there is little if any likelihood in the foreseeable future for an ending of the Sino-Soviet estrangement or a significant rapprochement. Not so a certain lessening of tensions between Moscow and Peking. Though unlikely in the near future, this will remain a definite possibility, brought on by a number of considerations and contingencies. For example: a desire on both sides to damp down the incendiary level of conflict between them; a mutual desire to reduce the drain in resources created by the great forces they have to array against one another; a Chinese response to US actions -- or lack of actions -- which in the eyes of Peking's leaders substantially lessened the deterrent credibility of their "US card;" or a move taken by a post-Deng, military-dominated Chinese regime to reduce Soviet pressures on China substantially. X

Should the two Communist powers lessen the level of their antagonism and/or possibly move toward a Sino-Soviet SALT, the consequences could be substantial for the US. These might entail force deployments, targeting, trade markets, new security demands on the US from frightened East Asian governments, restoration of closer Soviet and Chinese relations with North Korea, new pressures on the Japanese to alter certain of their policies toward the USSR, wide-spread perceptions in the world that the US world policy had suffered a major setback, etc.

There is enough possibility of a Sino-Soviet detente occurring, and enough validity in the possible consequences raised above, to justify such a what-if NIC project.

2. World Consequences of a Major US Domestic Crisis. We certainly cannot rule out the possibility that a year or more from now the US could be beset by some combination of deep recession, great unemployment, civil unrest, further loss of foreign policy consensus, a turning inward away from the world, etc. Should this occur there would be sizable consequences for the US in the world: economic, diplomatic, and other. Not a happy topic, and perhaps not one to advertise, but certainly one to brood about and consider in advance. 7

Consequences of a Breakthrough in "Peace" Sentiment and Influence in Western Europe. It is not impossible that over the next year or two a combination of circumstances -- e.g., fear, economic pressures, Soviet propaganda, disenchantment with US policies -- could bring "peace" parties or ✓

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leaders to positions of dominance or significant influence in various Western European governments. The consequences could be great. Such a study should be done.

Hark Ford

cc: RL

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